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Tropical cyclone hat-trick

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Tropical cyclone activity is reaching a peak across the globe with the potential for a triple landfall of storms in the Atlantic and Pacific this Saturday and Sunday.

Karl, Igor and Julia, 16 Sept. © NOAA

Hurricane Karl is now a Category 3 hurricane with 125 mph winds and could make Category 4 before its predicted landfall on the south-west Gulf coast of Mexico later on Friday. Heavy rain over the mountainous areas is expected to lead to floods, as well as extreme winds.

Meanwhile, Typhoon Fanapi in the western Pacific is approaching Taiwan and is expected to make landfall overnight Saturday/Sunday (GMT). Although only equivalent to a Category 1 or 2 hurricane, winds are still gusting to around 115 mph. The biggest threat will be heavy rains and subsequent disruption in remote mountainous areas.

Late on Sunday and into the early hours of Monday (GMT), Bermuda is predicted to be hit by Hurricane Igor. On Friday this was still a Category 3 hurricane and was likely to remain so, bringing exceptionally strong winds to the island before moving northwards into the north-western Atlantic.

The 2010 Atlantic hurricane season remains very active with Hurricane Julia joining Karl and Igor. This is the first time in 12 years that three hurricanes have existed simultaneously in the Atlantic, and Julia was the strongest hurricane to have formed so far east since credible records began in the 1970s.

Earlier this week both Julia and Igor were simultaneously classified as Category 4 hurricanes — the first such occurrence in the Atlantic since 1926.

Met Office forecasters will continue to work with the National Hurricane Center in the USA and provide predictions of the storms to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

Our tropical cyclone forecast

Latest details on the Atlantic storms

Hurricane categories

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